### 52. Facilities for Punja Cultivation.

MR. CHACKO JOSEPH (*Member, Changanachery taluk, Group II*) said that rice was the staple food of the people of Travancore and that it was deplorable that the State had annually to import the major part of the supply required. This not only meant a considerable drain but caused acute and widespread distress as during the last war. Travancore should aim at being self-contained in the matter of paddy. Kuttanad and Nanjinad formed the two rice fields of the State; but while considerable expenditure had been incurred and was being incurred in the latter area, the former was comparatively neglected.

The construction of the Kuttapuzha canal, the usefulness of which had been urged more than once in the past sessions of the Assembly by the Members representing Changanachery and Tiruvalla taluks, had not yet been taken up. The opening of the canal would not only render annual cultivation possible on 20,000 *paras* of land and bring about an increased output of 3 lakhs of *paras* of paddy annually, but would also increase the productivity of extensive lands. The *punja* crops of Kaviyur were now being destroyed by floods almost every year. The opening of the canal would also prevent the damages annually caused to the Tiruvalla-Kozhenchery road. The Economic Development Board visited the locality some time back and had recommended the early execution of the work. The Member requested the Dewan to visit the place in company with the Chief Engineer and the Director of Agriculture and to sanction the immediate carrying out of this very useful work.

Most of the *punja* lands were cultivated only once in two years. The construction of a number of small canals would alone enable the ryots to cultivate the lands annually, as there was no scope now for irrigation and drainage. An irrigation department should be organised under the Director of Agriculture for this purpose.

The Irrigation Regulation passed eighteen years ago was inoperative in Kuttanad. Cultivation of extensive blocks was often rendered impossible by the neglect or indifference of one ryot who did not put up his bunds. The Tahsildars did not exercise the powers vested in them to get such work done. The powers under this Regulation should be suitably modified and vested in the officers of the Agricultural Department. Similar concerted action was also required in the matter of pumping water, and there should also be statutory provision for the realisation of cost from the owners holding lands in one block. The civil courts were unable to give timely or adequate remedy in these cases; and the Director of Agriculture should be invested with the necessary powers in this direction also.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Chacko Joseph, in regard to the Kuttapuzha canal, as you know, the scheme for constructing the canal was abandoned and then on the motion of the Economic Development Board, the question was taken up again and the Chief Engineer was instructed to investigate and submit proposals again. He has now got his report nearly ready and hopes it will reach the hands of the Government shortly, so that the Government will be able to take up the question and see whether it will be possible to carry it through. The other points will be considered carefully in consultation with the Director of Agriculture.

### 53. Improvement of Agriculture.

MR. S. KUMARAVELU PANIKKAR (*Member, Nominated*) brought to the notice of the Government the present condition of agriculture in the State and suggested certain measures for its improvement as also for the improved working of the Agricultural Department.

Firstly, he noticed the insufficiency and deterioration of cattle with special reference to Nagercoil town. The unsatisfactory condition of cattle was due to the absence of proper grazing grounds. In Nagercoil particularly, that was the case. The Silpasari tank, Tattiyarkulam, Edayarkulam, Savayarkulam and the Chayakkarankulam which were unfit for agricultural purposes should be converted into grazing grounds. Early orders should be passed on the Nagercoil Municipal President's communication to the Government on the subject. Slaughter of cows should be prohibited.

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Secondly, dung manure being insufficient to cope with the extension of agriculture, other manures were necessary. To meet the increased demand, prepared manure was being imported from foreign countries which drained away much of the saving of the ryots. Artificial manures should be prepared in Travancore and importation entirely stopped. Such manures should be sold on credit to agriculturists through depots. The agriculturists who grew green-leaf manure on Government *porambokes* were being persecuted by the land revenue authorities with fines and prohibitory assessments. Such a procedure was detrimental to agriculture and therefore orders should be issued permitting the growing of green-leaf manure on *poramboke* lands and on the banks of tanks and channels.

The Agricultural Loans Regulation was not properly worked as a result of the delay in granting loans and as a result of the borrowers not applying the loan to agricultural purposes. The consequence was that agriculture did not really derive any benefit from the loans and it was necessary that Government should prevent the misapplication of the loans. The Regulation could be better worked by the Agricultural Department as the officers of that department had facilities to come into closer contact with the agriculturists and to see if the full amount of the loan was invested on land.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Kumaravelu Panikkar, several of the points in your representation have already been taken up in this Assembly. There is one point, however, in respect of which it is necessary to answer you specifically, and that is on the subject of insufficiency of cattle and grazing grounds. It is not possible to say to what extent the one influences the other. It may be that the people in the country find it much more profitable to bring the lands under cultivation than to let them lie as grazing grounds. That may directly affect the condition of the cattle and their number. Because there are insufficient grazing grounds, therefore, of necessity the cattle must be small in number. Or, it may be the other way. Because of the unsuitability and the inferior quality of the cattle, it is not worth while to retain extensive grounds as grazing grounds.

2. Every effort is being made to improve the breed of the cattle in this country. One thing we have got to remember and that is that the country is hardly suited by nature to be a pastoral country, and our Agricultural Department which deals with cattle is for ever faced with the hopelessness of maintaining the breed of cattle. Rapid deterioration seems to be the universal order here. In two or three generations the cattle which begin by being good deteriorate into the stunted and diminutive variety you see all over the country. Until the people learn to take a pride in their cattle and learn how to breed their cattle and how to preserve the breed, it will be impossible for the Government to do more than what they are doing now and what they have been consistently doing for some time past, apparently with little or no effect.

3. Grazing grounds, I have already mentioned to you, are a real difficulty. People here want to bring every inch of land under cultivation, because it pays them better, and secondly, the formation of the country is such that, unless you go into the High Ranges, possibly there is very little ground for grazing purposes. There is no good trying to bring into this country conditions which do not exist. All that we can do is to adapt ourselves to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. The only hope of improving the position of the cattle is for the people to acquire the habits of stall feeding and stall culture of cattle.

### 54. Development of commerce and industries.

MR. K. C. EAPEN (*Member, Trading Classes, Trivandrum*) said that commerce deserved an important place in the thoughts and activities of the Government as it was the foundation of all progress. The development of commerce was essential if Travancore were to advance economically in the scale of nations. The Member said he would repeat the representation he had made at the twentieth session and state what action had or had not been taken on his suggestions then made. There was no separate department for commerce and no responsible official whom the people could approach for consultation in regard to mercantile matters.

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